

Hobbies

Ante up and buy a book to check your 'poker' bill value

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—Recently I came across a dollar bill with serial number G21111111D—great for poker and interested collectors. Are you aware of its value for fun or profit?

S.P., Chicago

A—First, you should buy a book or magazine that lists average retail coin prices to get a rough idea of the value of your items. Two examples are "A Guide Book of United States Coins" by R.S. Yeoman (sold in most coin shops for \$6.95, softcover) or Coin Prices magazine (single copy sold for \$3.50 by Krause Publications, 700 E. State St., Iola, Wis. 54945).

Then, call or visit a few coin shops in your area (check Yellow Pages of phone book for names

and addresses). Shop around for the best offer, but remember that dealers buy material at wholesale prices, which often are at least 30 percent below retail.

Q—I have four half dollars with the inscription "200 years of freedom" and "Independence Hall." The date is 1776-1976. Also, when will 1776-1976 drummer-boy quarters be of value?

E.B., Haslett, Mich.

A—I'm not a go-between for persons wanting to buy or sell collectibles. You should visit a coin dealer or place an advertisement in a hobby publication, but don't expect a lot of offers. Most \$1 silver certificates of the various 1935 and 1957 series retail for less than \$2 each, unless in crisp, uncirculated condition. Such bills are common among dealers and collectors.

Q—I'm told there are multiple versions of 1982 Lincoln cents. Can you list them? Is there a

good way to tell them apart?

B.C., Crete

A—During 1982, the U.S. mints in Philadelphia and Denver switched from making Lincoln cents out of an alloy of 95 percent copper and 5 percent zinc to copper-plated zinc. The older cents are slightly heavier—3.11 grams each compared with 2.5 grams each for zinc cents. Thus, you could determine the metal composition by forming a balance with a ruler.

Also during 1982, Uncle Sam modified the Lincoln-cent die, creating "large date" and "small date" cents. Experts often check

the space within the "8" to identify the two types.

The Philadelphia Mint made all four 1982 cents (95 percent copper, large and small dates; copper-plated zinc, large and small dates) while Denver issued three versions (the 95 percent copper "small date" was not produced in Denver). Circulated specimens of the seven 1982 coin types have no value as collectibles.

A—A hobby catalog suggests that a \$1 bill such as yours (serial number ending with seven "ones") might retail for \$25. But that's an educated guess because there's no regular market.